

NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE
PATROL
EDMONTON TO YUKON DISTRICT

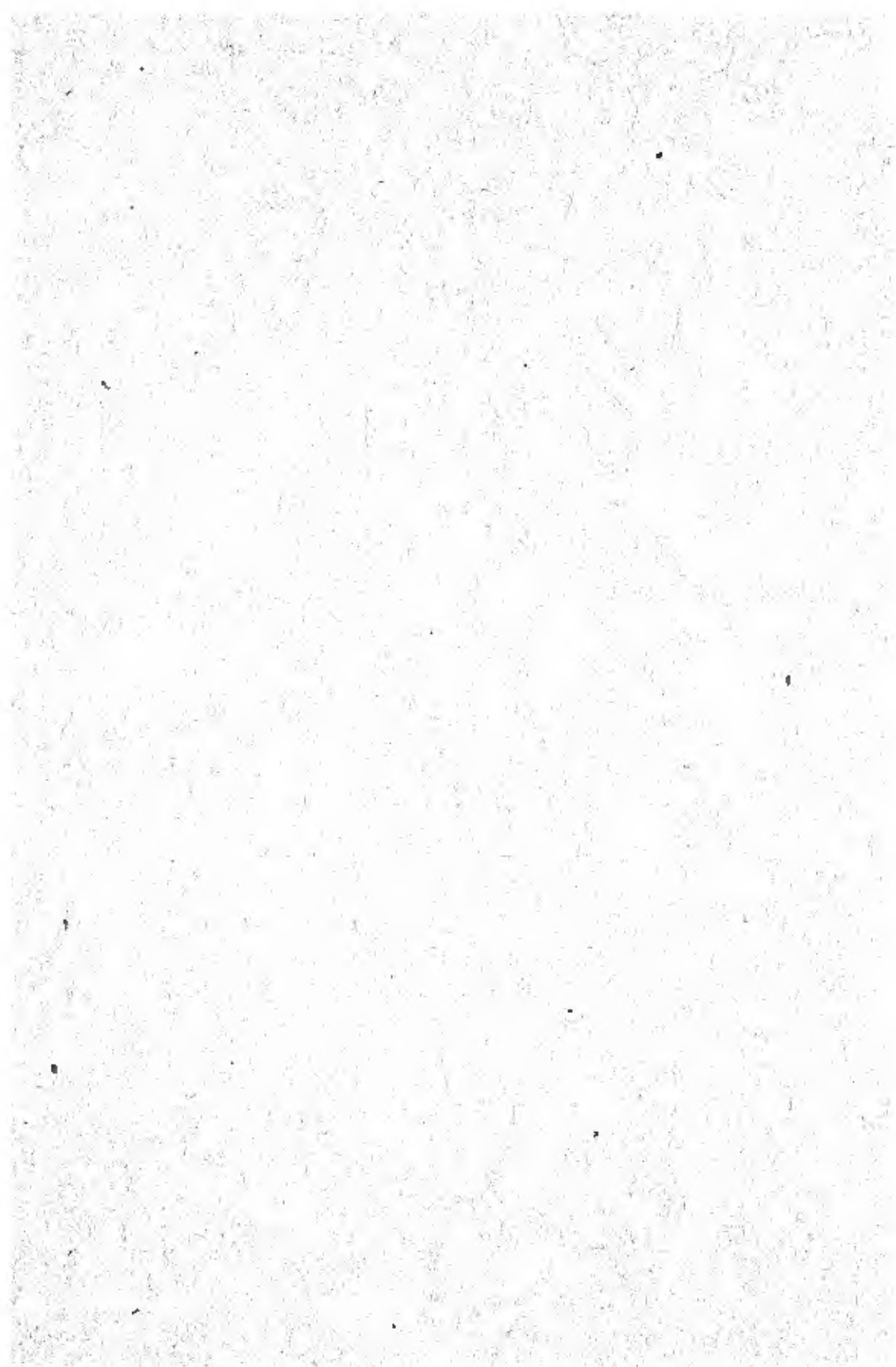
1897

BY

INSPECTOR J. D. MOODIE



OTTAWA
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PATROL REPORT

INSTRUCTIONS TO, AND DIARY OF, INSPECTOR J. D. MOODIE IN
CHARGE OF PATROL FROM EDMONTON EN ROUTE TO THE
YUKON 1897.

NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE,
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER,
REGINA, 27th August, 1897.

To Inspector Moodie,
North-west Mounted Police.

You have been selected to command a small party about to leave Edmonton for the head waters of the Pelly River, the object being to collect exhaustive information on the best road to take for parties going into the Yukon via that route, and with this object in view you must map out the route, and carefully mark the portions over which a wagon trail can be made without expense, and the portions that require corduroying, grading or ditching; stating whether the work would be great or small. The portions of the road that cannot be made practicable for wagons, except at enormous expense, must be reported on as practicable or otherwise for pack trains, driving cattle over, etc., and you must report on all creeks and rivers that require bridges or ferries, their width, approaches, etc., and all along the route you must note the supply of fuel, feed and hay.

The main object is to get parties with wagons as far as possible, and then, when not practicable with wagons, with pack horses and cattle, to the navigable waters of the Pelly River, avoiding the dangerous navigation of the Liard River, if possible. You will also report on favourable sites on the route for depots of provisions to be placed, either by public or private enterprise. In fact you will be expected on return to supply such reliable information that a party leaving Edmonton will know exactly what they must expect at all points en route. You must be careful in preparing your report to stick to actual facts, and not be influenced by any one.

No unavoidable delay must occur in obtaining this information.

(Sgd.) L. W. HERCHMER,
Commissioner.

NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE.
EDMONTON, 2nd September, 1897.

To Inspector Moodie,
North-west Mounted Police.

On leaving St. John, in my opinion, based on the information I have been able to collect, the best route for you to travel with a view of reaching the Yukon is to follow up the Peace River to the vicinity of the mouth of the Halfway River, and then to travel along that river to its upper waters, where it comes out of the mountains. Immediately across are several lakes, one called Pyke and another Tachardy Lake. If possible you should get across to these lakes from whence there is said to be a pack trail to Fort Sylvestre on Dease River, and then down Dease River to its confluence with Liard, and

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then up that river or its branch to Frances Lake. You may find it possible to strike the junction of the Liard and Dease rivers where there used to be a winter post, and may still be, without going to Sylvestre's, which will greatly shorten the distance. Your point is Pelly Banks, and the shortest route you can make the better, always bearing in mind that the route must be by land, and practicable, where possible, for wagons and always for pack horses.

Your party consists of 4 men and any Indian or Indians you may from time to time find it expedient to engage who have local knowledge. The surveyor with you must make himself generally useful, and must take full notes for you of everything en route. You must read his notes daily and see that he has everything down, particularly noting places suitable for settlement, hay available and land suited for farming. I think it will be advisable for you to keep full particulars yourself, and if you find that you differ from the surveyor, it will be advisable to talk the matter over with your men, and settle the point on the spot. You have 100 lbs. of pemmican with you, this must be kept until the last resource, and may be the means of taking your party into the Klondike.

It is impossible to give you detailed instructions, but with good men, plenty of provisions and fair luck, you should be able to get to Klondike during the winter. Remember that you have a reserve of provisions at St. John's, on which you can give orders, and take every chance of sending back letters reporting your progress. The H. B. at St. John's or other posts will forward them, and you have a letter from their commissioner to all H. B. officials. It may be necessary at Sylvestre's or elsewhere, to get dogs for the rest of your trip owing to snow. You have full authority, but remember, that the object is to find a horse and cattle track where a wagon road is impossible.

(Sgd.) L. W. HERCHMER.

Commissioner.

DIARY.

Saturday, 4th September.—Left Edmonton.

Sunday, Monday, 5th and 6th September.—En route to St. Anne.

Tuesday, 7th September.—Wet morning. Left St. Anne's at 11.15 a.m. and arrived at the Narrows at 12.30 p.m., distance 7 miles. Bad trail, but can easily be made good for wagons. Sent H. B. Co.'s boat over by team and freighted our packs. Swam horses and crossed packs 4.15 p.m. Packed horses and left at 5.40 p.m., made 5 miles and camped. Heavy rain at 7.30 p.m. Good pack trail S. W. along lake through timber, very little trouble to make good wagon trail. From end of lake we struck open country with low willow scrub. Fine feed and water at camping ground.

Wednesday, 8th September.—Heavy rain until late in afternoon, followed by sharp frost at night. Stayed in camp and practised packing ponies.

Thursday 9th September.—Breakfast at 5.30 a.m. Made one drive of 15 miles to-day, as unpacking and packing at noon takes too much time. Good pack trail all the way. First 2 miles through fairly open country covered with thick willow scrub and scattered timber. Course N.W. Then heavier timber with fallen burned trees and undergrowth. Every mile or so open spaces with good feed and water. These are usually covered with low willow bushes. No trouble to make a cart trail, and not much to cut out except undergrowth. A few wet places which could be bridged with poles; any soft swampy places can be avoided by taking the ridges. Twelve miles from the Narrows is Island Lake, a good sized piece of water. Camped for the night at "Stoney Lake Creek." A bad camping ground, in timber, but good feed for horses in swamp cl se to. Day's travel about 15 miles. Course last 12 miles nearly W.

Friday, 10th September.—Left Stoney Lake Creek and camped for the night at first crossing of "Paddle River" at 5.15 p.m., distance about 20 miles. Course, 3 miles N., 1½ mile S.W., then W. by N. Rolling country with bush, but trees are not large.

Here and there open swampy places with willow brush. Fair feed. Some of these would need to be corduroyed, but only short stretches (100 yards or so). No difficulty in making road. Crossed the Pembina this afternoon; the south side has steep banks from the bench land; approach would need some grading, which would be easily done, or another trail found. River is shallow at present, and ford runs up the river along a bar for about 500 yards. From signs on banks I should judge this river to be very high and swift in spring. Actual width about 150 yards. W. or N. bank not so heavily timbered as E. or S. From crossing there is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles fairly open country, then 3 miles brush and small timber, then open country to Paddle River. This is narrow and fordable, only requiring about 30 yards grading for approach on each side. It is really only a creek and could be bridged with poles for high water in spring. $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles W. of the Pembina is Deep Creek, with high steep banks requiring zigzag graded approaches. East side is the worst. A few short soft places on trail would require filling in with brush and poles. No hay could be got on this trail so far. Easy for cattle, wagon or cart trail. A gang of 10 men could cut out 6 or 7 miles a day at least.

Saturday, 11th September.—Engaged two Half-breeds who came to Paddle River with some Americans (they are from St. Anne's), to go to the Athabasca and help us across: also to pack, etc. Made 25 miles in two drives. Crossed Paddle River again to-day. Country much more open, with frequent small patches of prairie. Splendid feed, but not large enough pieces for haying. No trouble in making good roads. Small muskegs are frequent where there are openings, but are not more than 50 or 100 yards across, and could be avoided in most cases by following the ridges of land chiefly to the south of pack trail. Where we camped to-night, 25 miles from first crossing of Paddle River, is a fine hay meadow of about 600 acres, with fine water (Paddle River again) at edge of bush to the S. of W. end of meadow. About four miles east of this we struck a very bad tamarac swamp, large trees, both standing and fallen, all burned. This was about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile across, but could be avoided altogether by keeping to the south along ridge; in fact a better wagon trail could be got I think by keeping south of present pack trail throughout. Course to-day W. N.-W. I engaged the two Half-breeds as Hardisty was the only really good packer, although Constable Fitzgerald was a close second after a little practice: he is a splendid man, and as time is everything at this late season, I thought it better to hire help, and so get through to St. John's as soon as possible.

Sunday, 12th September.—Left camp at 8 a.m. and nooned at Good Creek, 10 miles west. Country as a rule not so thickly wooded, although some bad places. For first 10 miles we followed the ridges, crossing the various valleys which all trended towards the valley of the Athabasca. A considerable amount of grading, corduroying and bridging would have to be done on to-day's route, but the latter would only need to be poles and logs, which are alongside, and the spans would be quite short, and even then I doubt if present pack trail would be passable in the spring. It follows the shortest trail, but a wagon trail would have to follow the ridges and so avoid most of the bad places. The muskeg referred to yesterday is very large, extending almost, if not quite, to the Athabasca. There is good feed all along, but no places where hay could be got in any quantity. Water plentiful and good. From noon camp, named by the Half-breeds "Moodie's Creek," $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile takes us to the river. This we follow for $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the mouth of the Macleod. At present these rivers are very low, but the current is very swift at the junction. A ferry would have to be put in here, or some good boats. The Hudson's Bay Co., and Alex. McAllister, a Half-breed (formerly interpreter for the police at Edmonton) are building log shacks and starting trading posts here. The Athabasca River here is about 450 yards wide; banks on both sides are easy. Some heavy cutting out of dead and standing timber would have to be done in last three miles. Good feed about a mile up Macleod River. The Hudson's Bay Co. put up about 20 tons of hay here this year, and more could be got. The Californian party which left Edmonton 22 days ago are camped on north side. General direction for to-day's march, about west by north.

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Monday, 13th September.—Crossed outfit this a.m. in dug out hired from Stony Indians camped here hunting. These killed four bears last week.

Tuesday, 14th September.—Heavy rain all morning. Swam horses across Athabasca at noon, and started in heavy rain. Hired two Stoneys for \$4. to cut and clear 12 miles of old trail by which we save about 12 miles. This trail runs W. up river; the other, and one used lately, goes N. and then S.W. forming two sides of triangle. Fair sized hay meadow about 1 mile from crossing. About 10 loads might be cut here. Route W. by N. Good country for making cart trail. Distance 5 miles. Sprinkle of snow this p.m.

Wednesday, 15th September.—Two horses missing this morning; country is so heavily timbered that horses cannot be picketed, all are close hopped and have bells. Waited until 2 p.m. for return of men hunting for these. Then went on 6 miles and camped on Owl River. Trail very bad with fallen timber and soft places, but a little work would make it all right. Hardisty and Pepin arrived at 7 p.m. with missing horses; they had broken their hobbles and returned to old camp on S. side of Athabasca. Fine night. Indians failed to complete their contract, only going half way, so I refused to pay them anything. They belong to a bad family by repute.

Thursday, 16th September.—Left camp at 10 a.m. Breakfast over before 6 a.m., but it is very hard to collect horses in the timber, and the party is too large for the number of packers. Hardisty and I packed 10 out of the 24 horses this morning, and yesterday did 12. To-day was very bad travelling, the worst we have had, through fallen burnt timber with here and there small muskegs. A good road, however, could be cut at small cost, as all the timber for bridging creeks, corduroying, &c., is alongside. The Macleod creek was crossed about 4 miles from last night's camp. It is about 30 yards wide, shallow, and good gravel bottom. Good approaches. Somewhere in the thick timber we lost a horse and only discovered it on arriving at an open spot where they could be counted. Two men returned to hunt for it, and we went into camp at 2 p.m. at a beaver dam with fine feed, open ground and good water. Californians pulled out of this camp yesterday. We passed the Owl River again to-day. It is about 100 yards wide here, with a number of bars, and very shallow at present. Easy country for wagon trail. Distance about 8 miles. Course W.N.W.

Friday, 17th September.—Hardisty and Pepin returned at 10 a.m. with lost horse. It had returned to old camp. We pulled out at noon and made about 9 miles: best country for travelling we have had. About 5 or 6 miles out we crossed Owl River: shallow and good bottom. Good camping here, and also 3 miles farther on where we camped on small creek amongst open pines. No tents required. Fine night. Course W. N. W.

Saturday, 18th September.—Breakfast at 5 a.m. Started at 8 a.m. Open country, easy to make road through up till noon when we camped. Good feed and water. Distance 13 miles. In afternoon trail for 8 miles very bad, through fallen timber, two bad muskegs and some small ones, but none of them long. No feed for 2 miles farther on than camp. Camped W. side of second large muskeg and took horses on three-quarters of a mile to feed. Quite dark when we unsaddled. Muskeg about 200 yards wide and very bad. Passed 3 camps of Californians east of here. Course slightly South of W., 2 horses very bad colds.

Sunday, 19th September.—Did not leave until 9.30 owing to a horse getting away. This was the fault of the Half-breed and I had him up to-night about this and other things. He has given a great deal of trouble. Fallen timber, bad holes and muskegs were the rule to-day. Lots of water but no feed until we camped after 17 miles travel. We passed the leading party of Californians to-day. Fine nights. Camped on "Two Creeks." Course W.S.W.

Monday, 20th September.—Very hot day. Travelled 3 hours through bad muskegs. Had to cut brush and make a trail. Some of the horses mired and a lot of trouble to get them out. No feed. At noon we camped for the day at good feed and water. Hardisty, Const. Fitzgerald, Pepin and Half-breed went on this afternoon and made road

through "Long Muskeg" and some small ones for about 5 miles. Advance party of Americans arrived at 4 p.m. Although these muskegs in present state are very bad, yet a road could be put through at small cost for pack horses, cattle or carts, as the timber is thick but not large as a rule. The amount of feed here is not great, but enough for 100 head of stock for a day or two. Course to-day nearly W.

Tuesday, 21st September.—Fine day and easiest travelling we have had, but no feed for 16 miles. Camped at 3 p.m. as no feed within half a day's travel. A few small muskegs were had, but nothing to speak of. Fine feed and water in open space where we camped. Some Indians killed a bear here two days ago.

Wednesday, 22nd September.—Roads very bad for last 6 miles to-day. Long muskegs, fallen timber and hard travelling. We made 16 miles. The first 10 miles good, but no feed. The last 6 miles took us nearly 4 hours. Splendid feed on fair sized meadow of W. side of small river which runs out of lake (good feed for about one mile on east side of river also, but no water). Good feed amongst burnt brush for the last mile to river. Cross the river for best feed. Course about W.S.W., but trail very winding.

Thursday, 23rd September.—Lay over all day. I went on with four men eight miles, making bridges, brushing bad places and blazing trail through burnt and fallen timber. Good trail for one and a half mile, then very bad for six miles or more. Impossible to travel until it was fixed. Returned to camp at 5 p.m. Hard frost last night.

Friday, 24th September.—Travelled five hours. Very hard trail, even after work done on it yesterday. Camped on Moose's Lake, as too far to go on to next feed. Good feed and water. Indian shack here. Lake about two miles by three-quarters of a mile. Course about W.S.W. Small patch of feed with a little water about two miles east of here (just after leaving last muskeg). Bears plentiful, Indians killed one last night close to camp, and same family has killed 12 since 1st of month. Good fish in this lake. Trail crosses the creek (about 40 yards wide) close to camp. Fine feed here, but not very much of it. "Moose" the Indian who has the shack here, says that by keeping either north or south of present pack trail along the ridges, the muskegs can be avoided, but that the country is covered with fallen burnt timber and it is not worth his while to cut a trail. As Indians travel light these muskegs do not bother them much, and they don't care to cut new trails. Fine weather.

Saturday, 25th September.—Travelled three hours, mostly through bad trail. Small muskegs and fallen burnt timber, when we arrived at good camping place. Fine feed and water only about five miles from last night's camp, and one mile farther west, another fairly good sized place, but not as good as the first. We could have made these yesterday if guide had not said there was no feed for 16 miles. After half an hour's rest we travelled on about nine miles and camped for the night. Travelling very slow, and horses tired, as we took a branch trail by mistake, and so lost about two miles. Fairly good feed to-night. Distance 15 or 16 miles. General course W.N.W.

Sunday, 26th September.—Six miles from camp found good feed and water. Trail not good the first part, muskegs and fallen timber. Stopped for three-quarters of an hour at 1 p.m., and let horses feed without unpacking. Camped for night 4.30 p.m. on west side of Little Smoky River, fair feed. At 3 p.m. we first sighted this river running through deep valley. We travelled down a spur to the level, where there was good feed of considerable extent, but broken up by willow (green and burnt). Followed the river and camped on west side. River about 200 yards wide, very shallow, but shows signs of a rapid stream in flood. Good bottom. Course N.N.W. No hay except where valley is first struck. Distance to-day, 15 miles. Wet night.

Monday, 27th September.—Six horses missing this morning, packed the rest and went on. Hardisty and Pepin recrossed the river to look for horses. I went on eight miles and camped at large meadow on Little Smoky River to await return of men. Course nearly north. First three miles good open travelling, next two miles bad with muskegs and fallen timber, last three miles heavy open timber, fair travelling. "Smoky"

crossed the second time about two miles from last night's camp. Rain in afternoon. Fine camping ground all along valley of "Smoky," but none on high land. Men returned with 4 horses at 6 p.m. One pack horse and one belonging to Half-breed could not be found. I could not spare more time and came on.

Tuesday, 28th September.—Left at 9 a.m. and camped for noon at 1.15 p.m., having made about 15 or 16 miles. Fine feed almost all the way through bush. Last five miles through some fine stretches of meadow with willow scrub scattered over them. At 4 p.m. pack train started and I went ahead with Hardisty to Sturgeon Lake to try and get guide to St. John's, and get some more rations. Arrived there at 7.15 p.m., about 20 miles. Some heavy fallen timber for first five miles, then bush, but easy travelling; the last eight miles or so almost entirely open country. Fine feed. Grass quite green. No sign of frost. So far there is nothing to prevent a good trail being opened up at a comparatively small cost.

Wednesday, 29th September.—Went to the Narrows, about six miles around the lake, and hired Half-breed for \$15 to go to Grand Prairie. Pack train arrived at lake at noon. Purchased rations at Rivets, as Hudson's Bay Co. store closed; gave orders on officer commanding Fort Saskatchewan. Constable Fitzgerald reported Half-breed's second horse missing this morning, he would not hopple it. Discharged Half-breed and paid him in cash.

Thursday, 30th September.—Went to Narrows and crossed outfit in canoe, swimming horses. Will start for St. John's in morning.

Friday, 1st October.—Did not leave camp until 9.30 as Indian had not got his horses. Traded the "gray" got at St. Anne's and chestnut mare ridden by Tobin for a fine red roan H. B. horse 4 years old, and hired another at 75 cts. per day to Grand Prairie. Made 6 miles through heavy burned fallen timber and nooned. Were delayed nearly an hour this morning by two pack horses taking the crossing of a creek a N. end of the Sturgeon Lake and going nearly out of sight in quicksand. After dinner made about three miles and camped at fine feed and water. Travelled through easy bush this afternoon—some of the best we have had yet. Easy matter to make good trail. Weather fine. Course nearly W. from lake. Distance about 9 miles.

Saturday, 2nd October.—Left camp at 8.30 a. m. and made camp at 12 noon at Prairie Lake, six miles from last night's camp is good feed—in fact there is fair camping anywhere. At Prairie Lake (between 9 and 10 miles) is splendid feed and about 1,000 tons of hay could be cut around lake which is about three miles long and one mile wide at the broadest part. Hay in many places was up to the rider's knees—heavy bush surrounds the prairie. Trail leads up E. side of lake. Left camp at 3.30 p. m. It took 1 and $\frac{1}{2}$ hours to get in horses, saddle and pack. Camped for night at 5.45 p. m. Fine easy trail and good feed and water anywhere—good camping place to-night about 7 miles from noon camp. Trail lead along rather high plateau, on W. side a creek ran through good feed for about three miles starting about three miles from noon camp. Here we came across another good sized meadow with shallow lake about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile in circumference. Trail appears to be improving all the way from Sturgeon Lake. Distance about 16 miles. Course W. N. W.

Sunday, 3rd October.—Left camp at 9.30. The creek here is almost dry and we had to water the horses with pails out of a hole. Had fine travelling although there was some fallen timber at first. About three miles brought us to another good camping place. From here we ran along a valley for about 2 miles, with creek in it and good feed on N. side but south bank bad for horses getting down. Camped for noon at 12.45 p. m. at fine feed and water (old beaver dam) distance about nine miles. In afternoon we had fine travelling and made good time camping on some ground which had been burned over, beside small swamp patch. Good water and feed. A peculiar grass grows on these burnt places of which horses are very fond. All along to-day the feed in bush was good and road making easy, no muskegs or bad holes. Distance about 16 miles. Course W. N. W.

Monday, 4th October.—From camp the trail ran S. W. and we crossed a deep coulee about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. The course continued S. W. for about 4 and $\frac{1}{2}$ miles through fine open spaces with some times burnt timber. Splendid feed all through with vetches and wild pease. Then reached small lake with some hay. About 8 miles from camp ran along ridge of mountain with deep valley of Smoky on our right—banks of river valley are usually high. Very little sign of frost so far. Most of the pease and vetches quite green still. Arrived at Smoky at 12.45 p. m. After dinner swam horses and crossed all the outfit in a dugout. Some bad quicksands on both sides of the river. Distance travelled about 13 miles. Course S. W. then N. and W. We made this detour to avoid bush and keep on ridge near valley. Very steep and long hill going down to river. River at present about 200 yards wide and slow current. At high water width would be about 300 yards.

Tuesday, 5th October.—Very steep, long rise from river to bench, about a mile and one-half. After first rise over bank (country rises in sort of terraces to the level country) a level plateau about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile wide is reached with fine feed. Then there is a steep, long pull to bench land, but good road could be got by winding up coulees. From top of this the trail follows a stretch of fine open prairie with here and there some bush, but even through this the trail is almost good enough for carts in most places. About 10 miles from river a deep valley with creek is reached. On E. side the descent is fairly easy for cart trail but W. side is very bad and no coulee could be seen from pack trail. The only apparent way would be to grade a trail zig zag down the hill. The pack trail up this is about 500 yards—not more.—From here is the same kind of country to this night's camp. In fact it may be said there is no work to be done on this day's march except at coulee mentioned. The east side of this coulee is steep in places, but 10 men would make a cart road in a day at most. The feed is splendid and soil good, only drawback being scarcity of water. The creek at coulee and one slough being all there was near trail. Creek will be high in spring. We camped to-night about 16 or 17 miles from river. About 400 yards before reaching camp the trail branches off from west to south-west right at an Indian grave on the left of the trail. Leave what looks like main trail and take the left hand one. Where we camped here at sort of creek is good open prairie and fine feed. At the Smoky a good sized flat boat would be required.

Wednesday, 6th October.—Rain last night and until about 7 o'clock this morning. Left camp at 10.30 and made one march to H. B. Ranch on Ghost Creek, arriving at 3.15 p.m. Distance about 16 or 17 miles. Four miles after leaving camp we passed Mountain Lake, a good size with fine hay. It lies close to trail on north side, and one mile further west came to an old beaver dam with good feed and water. Up to this we had traversed fine open prairie with small bluffs of poplar and scrub. Here we struck some bush, open and of no great extent. At about 13 miles we came to deep coulee with high bank, but quite practicable for road, with creek running through it called "Burnt Creek." All to-day's travel was through splendid feed and fine ranching country but water is—on trail—6 or 7 miles apart. We travel on high ground and looking to south, is range of high hills, the White Mountains. Open prairie can be seen in many places amongst the timber, but our course can be easily traced by the line of prairie. Very little sign of frost. Out of our whole distance to-day about two miles will cover amount of bush passed through. Both "Ghost" and "Burnt" creeks would be deep in spring. Ed. Wilson, who came in from the States in 1890 with a party, is settled here and working for Bremner & Gunn, who have purchased the H. B. Ranch from the company together with stock and buildings. Wilson is the only one of the party remaining. Snow generally comes, to stay, about the middle of November. Summer frosts are rare. This is the first year that wheat has been tried in this vicinity and it did well. It has done well near the mouth of the "Smoky" at the Peace River crossing for some years. Other grain and all kinds of vegetables are fine crops and sure. Cabbages and cauliflowers of immense size are still in the H. B. Co. garden at Dunvegan. Cattle find their own feed almost all winter. Snow never over two feet and seldom as much, grass generally showing above it. Soil is fine black loam. There is good wagon trail to Dunvegan 15 miles north, not 35 as shown on map. There is

another trail from Sturgeon Lake, running to south of this but it is longer and very bad in places with muskegs.

Thursday, 7th October.—Hired horses and went to Dunvegan to inquire about dogs, &c., from St. John's. Campbell and Reed, the men sent out by Edmonton, have gone back, going no farther than Dunvegan, deciding it was too late in the year to go farther.

Friday, 8th October.—No dogs to be had here or at St. John's and have decided to send Hardisty to Slave Lake with letter to H. B. Co. there to purchase and forward 7 or 8 trains at once. Returned to camp this p. m. Purchased some necessary supplies from company at Dunvegan.

Saturday, 9th October.—Lay over in camp. Hardisty returned to Dunvegan last night to start this a. m. by boat and road to Slave Lake. This p. m. a fire was started by a Half-breed, Cunningham, guide to Johnson from Edmonton, prospecting. We all turned out and saved Bremner's stacks, but could not prevent the fire getting into the bush. Rain at night with high wind. Cunningham will be brought up for trial on Monday. Indians and Breeds rather mad against Johnson, although he was not to blame.

Monday, October 11th, 1897.—Last night another turn out to prairie fire; took out two rawhides and stopped fire from coming back on ranch from west. Lay over to-day waiting for return of wagon from Dunvegan.

Tuesday, 12th October.—Tate came out from Dunvegan. Wilson had lost one of his team. On Sunday one of the sorrels (No. 25) got a bad sore on near fore foot, just in the coronet. Brimmer thinks it is foot rot. To-day it is worse with proud flesh; have cauterised it, but the horse will be useless for some time. I have traded it with the Hudson's Bay Company for a good pack horse, raised in the "Beaver" country.

Wednesday, 13th October.—Wilson returned last night and I engaged him as guide to St. John's at \$2 a day. Discharged "Chant-ar" from 1st instant.

Thursday, 14th October.—Left camp at 10.30 a.m. and camped at 2.30 p.m., first nine miles over prairie where wagon could go. We then struck bank of deep coulee, main branch running north and south. We crossed it opposite mouth of branch running east and west, creek in main coulee. We descended on regular hogback, very steep and narrow, but a cart or wagon trail could be made. The pack trail on the other side (west side) is steeper and unpracticable for road, which would have to go up branch coulee a considerable distance to work up to bench. After leaving this we struck two miles of fallen timber, but small thin bush with underbrush; easy road making. Distance travelled about fourteen miles; course nearly west by compass. Good feed all the way; water at coulee, but not good, and no feed for horses in the bottom. Horses would have to be driven up to the bench. Good feed in open space at to-night's camp, but water some distance; a camp made on the dry creek (half mile back) would have been closer to water.

Friday, 15th October.—Left camp at 8.55 a.m. and ran through fairly thick bush of standing timber, with here and there patches of underbrush. Timber open and no trouble to cut trail. At noon crossed coulee with high steep banks, but easy to get fair grade down to, and up from creek in coulee, shallow at present, but will be wide in spring. It is known as "Turn Creek" or "Pine Bluff Creek." Good feed in open space on west side. At about a mile further west is another fork of same creek with better feed, good camping place. Then bush and fallen timber for a short distance, but not bad travelling. About four miles from last creek we came to burnt timber with large patches of open country, fallen burnt timber and small standing burnt trees, only about half a mile across this space. Then bush for a short distance and again large space of burnt. Across this is good travelling, lying burnt timber is no trouble here. Crossed creek again at 2 p.m., where a horse slipped down the bank into creek and had to be unpacked and some logs cut away to get it out; no harm done. Good feed on west side. Distance to-day

said to be 19 or 20 miles, I call it about 17 miles. General direction nearly west. Heavy rain to-night. Rained nearly all day.

Saturday 16th October. Fine morning. Left camp at 9 a.m., warm wind. After crossing burnt ground where we had camped we ran into standing timber with here and there open spaces. Good travelling for a time then when we came to open space on east side of small creek. Good feed but water hard to get at. About a mile farther is splendid camping place with fine water. We made it in three hours. From here there is hard travelling through fallen timber for about five miles, with here and there a better piece of trail, then open country with willow scrub to "place where the horses died." Magnificent feed and water here on east fork of Bear River. This is the same creek that we crossed previously. The trail ran along this creek for some miles, touching it here and there. At half a mile or so from to-night's camp is fine hay meadow about 400 or 500 loads could be cut. Good place for winter ranch. Distance travelled about twenty miles. General direction W.S.W., creek runs nearly south-east to north-west. This fork runs into west fork which rises in a lake near Grand Prairie.

Sunday, 17th October. Five horses strayed last night and we did not leave camp until 10.30 a.m. Fine travelling across open ground, no bush but thick willow brush in most places. After seven miles we came to a deep valley running nearly east and west. Water to the south-east in valley and splendid feed. Trail crosses creek and runs nearly W.S.W., a mile further on we again sight the valley with east fork of Bear River (same we camped on last night). A mile farther again touch same. A mile further across dry coulee running down to above river. Very little bush to-day, fine feed anywhere. To-night we camped on west side of Bear River, in the valley, on fine open ground, fine feed, water and wood, good A.I. camp. Steep incline to bottom of valley about 100 ft. in length but not too hard for good trail. Distance traveled 18 miles good, course W.S.W. Ranges of high mountains running from Spirit River are visible all the way to the south of trail. They are in a sort of spur. Bear River is almost always fordable except when snow first melts and is then high for only a week or two. If ford where trail crosses is not good there is another about a quarter of a mile below which is always good. River is about 75 yards across from bank to bank, with stony bed. It is known as Bear River throughout the country, but maps call it Mud River.

Monday, 18th October. Heavy rain and hard frost last night, and as it is an easy drive to-day I did not pull out until 10.10. Watered at lower ford and got to top of hill at 10.30 a.m. Steep incline but fairly easy grade could be got. As to-day was across "Pus-quiqua" prairie, splendid country like north of Battleford to Jackfish. About three and a half or four miles west of last night's camp we crossed coulee with small creek. To-night we camped at lake at west end of prairie. Good water and feed. Distance about 12 miles and course nearly west as a rule, although we ran south of west for a time. Fine warm day. No other camping place for fully 10 miles west.

Tuesday, 19th October.—Breakfast at 5.15 a.m. and left at 9 a.m. First mile or so open to west, then ran north-west to escape heavy timber for about two hours. Then south-west for another two hours through fairly good country for travel. Then struck heavy forest and burnt timber and had to thread our way through the best way we could. Very slow travelling. Course almost west. At 4 p.m. completely blocked by heavy fallen timber on all sides, a regular trap. Turned in a "V" and travelled south-east then edged into tamarack bush and after travelling about a mile west, again struck down timber, and night coming on (5.30 p.m.) made a dry camp. Travelled to-day, the long time lost in looking for trail out of down timber sighted a half hour. Actual time of travel about seven hours. A hard day on horses, travelling very bad and slow. Average made barely two miles an hour. Distance about 14 miles. General direction west. A good trail could be got north of our route to avoid all this down timber.

Wednesday, 20th October. Poppen and Wilson out this a.m. to find trail. Got good water and hay feed for horses within 200 yards of camp. Decide to stay here to-day and give horses a show and let men go out again to look for trail, as it only uses up

horses wandering through this country. Pepin returned at night, no success. Wilson not back.

Thursday 21st October. Pepin out again this a.m. returned in two hours. Sent him out again to south to work along creek. returned at 4 p.m. no success. Wilson not back.

Friday 22nd October. Some of the horses strayed on back trail. Pepin, Fitzgerald, Lafferty and Tobin went after them. Fitzgerald and Tobin will bring them back and the other two go on to follow trail. Pepin found running north. My opinion is we should have gone north of fallen timber instead of south, but the necessity is now to get round that way and knowing nothing of the country there may be more timber down there. Wilson still absent at 9 a.m., and have no idea of the direction in which to look for him and it is unsafe to let any of the party but Pepin go into the bush alone. Will wait to-day and if Wilson has not returned, will take up back trail for about six miles and strike north round down timber until we can strike direct to St. John's ourselves and there send back to look for Wilson.

Saturday, 23rd October. —Johnstone and an Indian came over to camp just as we were starting to go back on trail, they having followed our trail from the ranch. Found trail about 5 miles back in straight line. It took round N. of burnt timber then nearly W. through open country and green bush. Camped on Creek at W. end of bush amongst burnt standing timber. Frank Lafferty "off duty" with bad cut at base of thumb. Wilson has found this trail and started back blazing return trail to camp.

Sunday, 24th October. Sent Pepin and Indian back to look for Wilson following his blaze and went on ourselves. No trail after first 3 mile and crossed creek at the mouth of another by creek very steep and high banks. Then on W. over burnt fallen timber to "Kis-cab-is-kow" River good approach can be got, but steep high banks. Heavy fallen timber. Fair feed. Slight fall of snow.

Monday, 25th October. —Const. Fitzgerald ill, cramps, and diarrhoea. Too ill to move. Tobin and I crossed river and rode about 6 miles up river W. to find a good trail. All fallen timber which can be got round by going further north.

Tuesday, 26th October. —Three horses missing. Met Baptiste and Indian bringing them from last camp where they had returned during night, ropes broken. The last trail of Wilson was going towards St. John's from a camp fire, but it could not be followed far. Went out to try and find a way round fallen timber on S. side of river. Found one, but too late to go on. Considerable fall of snow this a.m. until about 11 a.m., when weather cleared and snow soon disappeared.

Wednesday, 27th October. Packed and ready to start at 5 a.m. when heavy rain began. Tobin very sick, same as Fitzgerald fainted once too weak to be moved. Slept all day. Remained in camp all day, putting horses across river to get better feed. Weather cleared early in afternoon.

Thursday, 28th October. Left at 9.20 a.m. and kept to S. side of river (Kis-cab-is-kow) which here flows E. and W. After travelling up it for about 6 miles we struck St. John's trail and at 2 p.m. crossed the above river and camped on W. side. River here flows N. and S. Country generally covered with bush, easy of travel, with occasional pieces of open with fallen timber and brush. About three miles E. of river crossed a creek about 100 yards with burnt timber. This is now drying up. Tobin still very weak, and as no certainty of water before reaching the Fine River, decided to camp for the day. Distance about 11 miles. From not knowing character of country I travelled on the 24th a more west course, whereas a good country trail was here S.W. Banks of this valley very high and steep about 200 ft., but could be made practicable for carts. River about 100 yards wide. Signs that it is deep and sw. ft. in spring. Good feed almost anywhere and water in small creek about half way. Lafferty can do right duty now. Indian guide sick last night same as Tobin and Fitzgerald, but not so bad. Gave him medicine and better to-day. Distance travelled about 11 miles. From high land approaching E. bank of river we got first view of the Rockies, free from snow. Good feed at camp. About 20 tons hay could be cut half mile up the river.

Friday, 29th October. Raining hard and lay over

Saturday 30th October. Left at 9.30 a.m. Making almost north for about 5 miles through thick timber with small open patches generally thickly covered with scrub. At 1.30 a.m. crossed small creek with good water and feed, but no great extent of latter. Found an Indian here who had just killed a bear and two cubs. Bought the carcass of a cub for \$1.50 as we were out of meat. From this N N W for about half an hour was standing breast, then heavy burnt timber with considerable fallen for about 4 miles then more green. Course nearly N W. Then nearly N through very heavy down timber for about a mile to open country with Indian grave on a knoll on W bank of small creek at the crossing. After about 1½ miles we again ran into roughish travelling through burnt fallen timber, &c., looking across very deep course to W with steep rough banks impassable for anything on wheels. A small creek runs N through this into the Pine River. On coming out of this through a small streak of small timber we are on high land about 500 feet above the Pine and Peace Rivers, about a mile W of their junction. We descended this and camped about 5.45 p.m. on the S. bank of the "Pine." Bad camping place and very bad feed.

Sunday 31st October. Tried for river, but found it too deep. Sometimes it is fordable. At 9 a.m. started to build raft and completed it at 2 p.m. Had dinner and made two trips across in the afternoon. Another load still to be crossed. This river at present runs nearly in a straight line, and raft was swept down 400 to 500 yards before landing was made on a gravel bar about 75 yards from the wooded bank of an island. It was had to be tracked up above starting place, and river recrossed when it was tracked up to where supplies were piled. This was very hard work. We had previously put the horses over swimming, good feed of goose grass on island. At present this is not properly an island, but at high water a deep stream flows all round it. Opposite centre of this island the creek mentioned yesterday flows into the Pine possibly this Pine is the Mud River shown on map. The camp out of this valley is like the half pitch roof of a house, but a road I think could be got at its mouth by fair grades where the bench trends down to junction of Peace and Pine Rivers.

Monday, 1st November. —Crossed last of the outfit and started at 11.30 a.m., arriving at St John, the long looked for place, at 1.45 p.m. Unpacked and tried to swim horses, but only succeeded with ten of them. The others refused to face the music of swift current, cold water and high wind. Hopped them on south side, where there is good feed. Mr Gunn, the representative of the Hudson's Bay Co. here, came over for us in a skiff, and gave us a hearty welcome to his house.

Tuesday, 2nd November. Took Hudson's Bay Co.'s large boat and a canoe across and tried again to swim horses, but no use. We then led them across behind the boat by ropes, two men handled the ropes, four pulled the oars and I steered. We crossed all but seven before dark. The last trip one horse gave out in the middle of the river, and would have drowned had he not been hauled along side and his head held above the water. This is the sad fate of these big river boats. Sharp frost and cold to night. Mr Gunn sent out this a.m. to get in Indians to make sleighs, moccasins, &c. Paid Francois Thomas tonight for guiding. I have agreed to take a moose from Johnston's when they overtook us.

Wednesday, 3rd November. Started squaws making moccasins, &c. Got balance of horses across the river, another one nearly drowned. Cloudy and looks like snow. From our (the Indian guide) a waiting here to return by our boat to Dunvegan. I am giving him rations in the meantime. Attending to horses' backs, &c.

NOTE. Referring to diary of 31st October, I learn from Mr Gunn that old Fort St John was situated down the river from here but was attacked by Indians and the work killed. It was then abandoned for some time. Afterwards a post was built on south side of river opposite here and this was subsequently moved to the present site on north side to facilitate trade with Indians. The river known to the Indians and others here and previously referred to as the Bear River is the one shown on the maps as the "Mud" River and the Pine River we crossed is the "South Pine" of the maps. My

error in diary of 31st October arose from not knowing that the Hudson's Bay Co's. post was for nearly 25 miles below this, and the maps showing the "South Pine" as coming into the "Peace" above the Fort (St. John). I also learn that there is a good gentle drop from the high lands on south of the "Pine" to the "Peace," just below the junction of the two. This I should judge would be the best route for a cart trail, and by crossing the "Peace" there instead of at St. John's, the crossing of the "Pine" would be avoided. From the "Peace" a trail could be easily graded to the bench up coulee and from there the trail is gradual only to the top, and thence is good open country for trail. I follow from here to "North Pine" or to the head waters of the "Halfway," crossing Ogishias trail. This would also shorten the distance by taking one side of the triangle instead of two.

Thursday, 4th November — Fine weather. Indians came in to see me. I could not get a hunter from this band, but learned that a Beaver Indian named Dick had gone through a pass in the mountains opposite head waters of "Halfway" river, and traveled at a post on the opposite side. I take this to be Fort Graham. Feed is said to be good to the mountains, but on the other side is thick bush. A sending out for "Dick," also for Napoleon Thomas, reputed to be the best hunter about here. Above band is taking out skins for caps, mitts and moccasins, of which latter we shall require at least 100 pairs. They are also making some sleighs for me, as there is no arch known to be where we are going. These sleighs I am having made with only a slight curve in front, so that they can be carried alongside a horse, the curve coming in front of chest and fitting over one another thus with horse between them.

Friday, 5th November. Traded mare No. for strong pack pony with Hudson's Bay Co. It is fat and used to the country. I hope to trade some more. Weather fine. Heard some shots from Hardisty at 7 p.m. He has camped about three miles down river.

Saturday, 6th November. Hardisty arrived this a.m. with boat. Brought 34 dogs with harness, five sleighs, some more axes, &c. Shot "Weary," the horse which nearly drowned in crossing river on 2nd November. Very thin and only made one good meal for the dogs, which were very hungry. Unloaded boat and put stores in company's store-house. Snowing slightly to-day. Writing report and copying diary for continuation of the commissioner up to late. These go down by boat returning to-morrow. No news of Wilson, who I fear, will never be heard of again alive.

Sunday, 7th November. No work done. Will camp on Sundays, if possible in the future. Boat returned to Dunvegan. One party of Americans arrived at Pine River on our trail.

Monday, 8th November. Made samplings of flour and grease for the dogs. Had about four hours talk with Indians this p.m. re country, and with Napoleon Thomas, a Half-breed Iroquois, as to going as hunter. I offered him \$875 a month and if he gets back under five months, his pay will be increased to \$900 a month. His average hunt for the winter five months amounts to \$500 worth of furs. He will come if he can arrange about his children being taken care of. Report says he is the best hunter in the district. His brother, Duncan, wanted \$800 a month and \$5 extra for each moose he killed. "Montague," the chief of the "Leavers," came in with four men, and I had a long talk with them. They all have to be fed and given some tobacco according to the custom of the country, before discussing anything. Hardisty and Joe Nooskeyhay took the dogs to an island about half a mile up the river, and will keep them there and make hannocks for feed.

Tuesday, 9th November. Hired Tom Sinclair to go through as dog driver, &c. Gunn reports him as an Al man. He worked for the government at Lake of the Woods and for the company as boatman, &c. His wages will be \$45 a month. All these men are to be brought back via the coast. They would not consent to being left to come back overland. Snow last night, but nearly all gone.

Wednesday, 10th November - Snow, last night, but Indians say "winter is not yet". Dick Eggs came in to-day and I engaged him at \$75 a month as a guide. This amount will be paid as long as he acts guide but if I have to hire others at Sylvester or elsewhere, his pay will then be cut down one-half. I am to take him through and send him back here via the coast and Edmonton, if I cannot send him back direct with a party. These are the only terms I can get him on and he is the only one who knows the passes through the mountains. We go by Halfway River to Fort Graham and thence to Sylvester. He says there is no chance of taking horses through the mountains now, too late in the year, snowing.

Thursday, 11th November - We helped Gunn to draw up the big boat out of the river. Repairing dog harness and getting things made for trip, snowing.

Friday, 12th November - Shot blind mare to feed dogs and make dried meat for them. No fish seen. Two 100 pounds dried meat from Regina was fed on the way up from Dunvegan. No dried moose to be had. Heavy snow storm.

Saturday, 13th November - Working on dog harness, &c. Snowing all day. Nearly blinded by smoke in teepee. At night had to bandage our eyes.

Sunday, 14th November - Fine bright day. Indians came in this p.m. with sergeants, moosehorns, &c. River closing fast.

Monday, 15th November - Making shafts for sleighs for horses. Fine day. Packing supplies for transport. Women working on clothing. River closing fast.

Tuesday, 16th November - Heavy snow storm and rough day. Bought bull from the company and killed him to make dried meat for dogs. Got 175 pounds of dried meat and two feeds for dogs out of him. I have to keep at least 14 or 15 of the best horses for sleighs and to kill at the mountains, and the rest are thin, and very little meat on them. Sold Pinto pony, to Dick Eggs for \$40 to go against his pay.

Wednesday 17th November - Napoleon returned from camp to-night. He is still uncertain about going with us, as he says his children are sick. I hope to get him, but will not wait after things are ready. Two men looking for birch for snowshoes. It is hard work getting Indians to do anything and they cannot be hurried like white men. Snowing hard and rough day. Hauling wood for camp. I got a bad toss from sleigh upsetting against a wooden log, came down full, was sitting on the seat to steer and was thrown about 15 feet hitting my head against a green log lying in the snow. Nothing worse than a shaking up and loss of some skin. Working on shafts, sleighs, &c.

Thursday, 18th November - Work getting on slowly. Snowing hard. It seems endless work, but there is no use starting out until everything is in order, and I can only keep on hoping for the best. Weather also may change for the better with change in the moon, and the snow is very light for sleighing yet. Gave Napoleon medicine for his children. Ice running to day. Very stiff in my neck and shoulders from fall.

Friday 19th November - Fine bright day. Hard frost. Shafts finished to day. Killed a horse which I took in trade for a small bay mare, and dried the best parts for dogs. Napoleon's children much better and he has decided to go with me. He got wood for two pairs snowshoes to-day. Women working on snowshoes. Working on sleighs and horse collars. Four of the Americans came over on the ice to-day. Made out contracts for men to sign.

Saturday, 20th November - Snowing in morning. Afternoon fine. We hauled 7 loads wood with the dogs this afternoon (6 of us including Gunn). The rest working on sleighs, &c. Cold.

Sunday, 21st November - 42° below zero last night.

Monday 22nd November - One horse "Stick in the mud" died last night. It was not frozen hard when found, and was cut up for dog feed. Working on collars, &c., "Joe Moosekeyah" sick.

Tuesday, 23rd November Three teams hauling wood. Working on harness, &c. Fine, but cold. Mulder towards evening

Wednesday, 24th November — Usual work. Mild. Frank Lafferty got nasty bite on left wrist from a dog. I cauterized it and dressed it.

Thursday, 25th November — Hauling wood. Sleighs finished. Killed another horse which would not have wintered. Two men looking up horses. Cold day. Snowing slightly. Working on sleigh covers, collars, &c. Frank's wrist doing well. dressed it afresh.

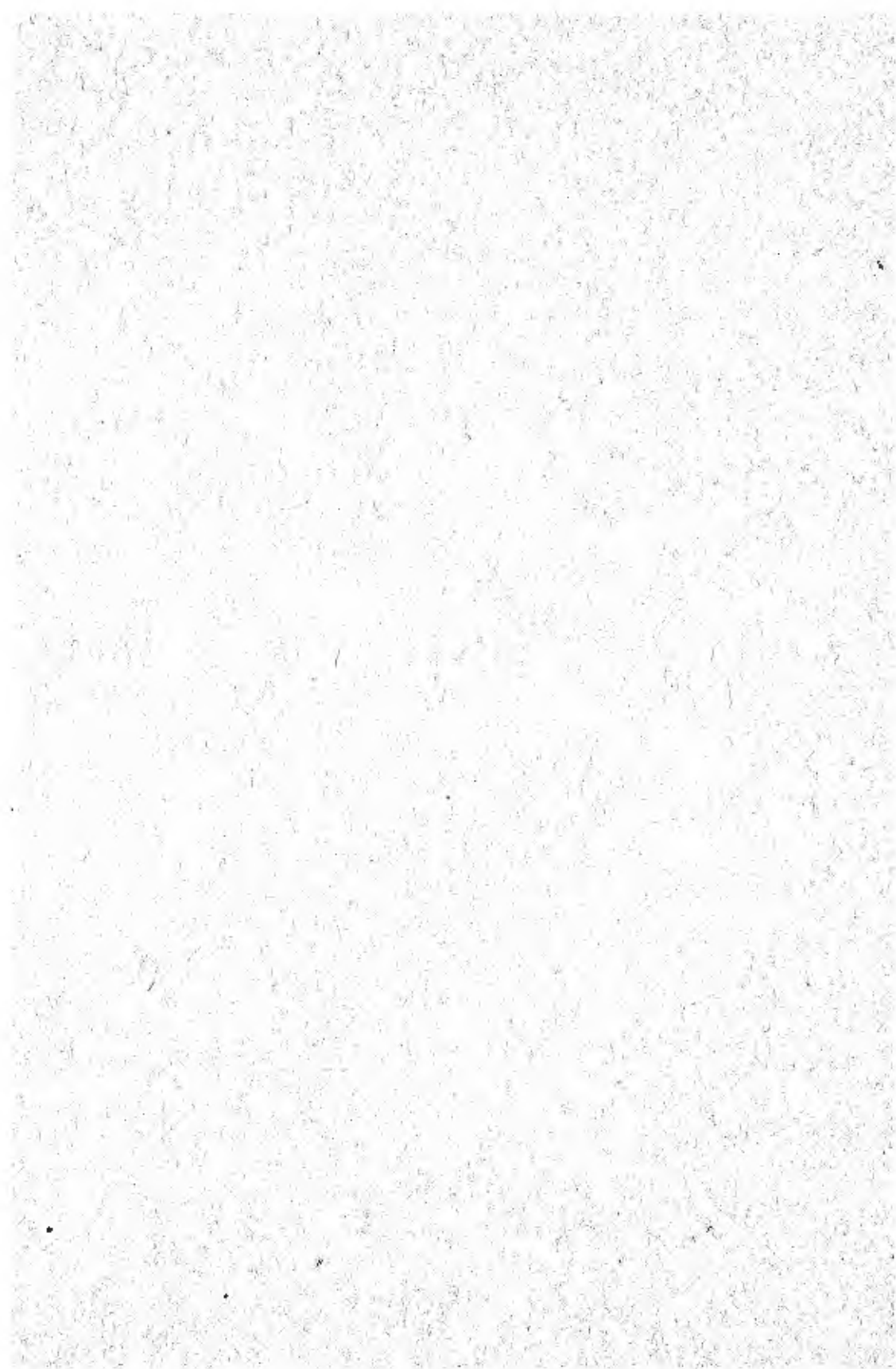
Friday, 26th November — Last night very cold. Coldest yet this winter. Packing things to be left behind and others to be sent back. Two men out for horses. Killed chestnut horse for dry meat. Very sharp to-day. Hauled two loads of wood. Frank's wrist doing well.

Saturday 27th November Usual work. Killed horse to make dried meat. About 30° below, but fine. Hauling wood this p.m.

J. D. MOODIE,

Inspector.

Hudson's Bay Company Post,
Fort St. John,
Peace River,



JUN 15 1926

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